Pastor Views on Pastor Misconduct

Survey of Protestant Pastors
Methodology

- The phone survey of Protestant pastors was conducted March 9 - 24, 2016
- The calling list was a stratified random sample, drawn from a list of all Protestant churches. Quotas were used for church size and Black Protestant denominations.
- Each interview was conducted with the senior pastor, minister or priest of the church called
- Responses were weighted by region to more accurately reflect the population
- The completed sample is 1,000 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed ±3.2%
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups
Survey Responses
Have the pastor step aside while the church investigates: 47%
Leave the pastor in the pulpit until allegations are proven: 31%
Not sure: 21%

Q18: “If allegations of pastoral misconduct are brought to church leaders, should they…”
“If allegations of pastoral misconduct are brought to church leaders, should they…”

Among Protestant Pastors

100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%

Tell all church members about the allegations
Keep allegations in confidence among the responsible church leaders during the investigation
Not sure

13%
73%
14%
86% say church leaders must inform the congregation when a pastor has been disciplined for misconduct

Q20: “Is it essential for church leaders to inform the congregation when a pastor has been disciplined for misconduct?”
24% say a pastor committing adultery must permanently withdraw from public ministry

The pastor does not need to withdraw from public ministry: 3%
Withdraw for at least 3 months: 4%
Withdraw for at least 6 months: 6%
Withdraw for at least a year: 21%
Withdraw for at least 2 years: 11%
Withdraw for at least 5 years: 5%
Withdraw for at least 10 years: 1%
Withdraw permanently: 24%
Not sure: 25%

Q21: “If a pastor commits adultery, how long, if at all, should the pastor withdraw from public ministry?”
Significant Differences

**Pastor**
- Ethnicity
- Age
- Education Level
- Self-identified Evangelical/Mainline

**Church**
- Region
- Denomination
- Average Attendance
- Largest Ethnic Group
Significant Statistical Differences

- Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among the church’s attendance and region, the pastor’s age and ethnicity, and the church’s largest ethnic group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Pastor’s Ethnicity</th>
<th>Church’s Largest Ethnic Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-49</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>18-44</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-99</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-249</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>Other Ethnicities</td>
<td>Other Ethnicities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250+</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>65+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Region is defined by US Census regions
Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were also made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among the self-identified Evangelical or Mainline, denomination, and education level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Identify</th>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>No College Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainline</td>
<td>Christian/Church of Christ</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pentecostal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presbyterian/Reformed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If allegations of pastoral misconduct are brought to church leaders, should they...

- Pastors age 65+ (36%) are more likely to answer “Leave the pastor in the pulpit until allegations are proven” than those 18-44 (27%)
- African American pastors are more likely to select “Leave the pastor in the pulpit until allegations are proven” (50%) than White pastors (30%) or Other Ethnicities (34%)
- Pastors of churches whose largest ethnicity is African American (49%) are more likely to select “Leave the pastor in the pulpit until allegations are proven” than those whose largest ethnicity is White (29%)
- Baptists (35%) and Pentecostals (43%) are more likely to select “Leave the pastor in the pulpit until allegations are proven” than Methodists (24%) and Presbyterian/Reformed (24%)
- Pastors with no college degree (38%) or a Bachelor’s (36%) are more likely to select “Leave the pastor in the pulpit until allegations are proven” than those with a Master’s (28%)
If allegations of pastoral misconduct are brought to church leaders, should they...

- Pastors age 55-64 (77%) and 65+ (78%) are more likely to answer “Keep allegations in confidence…” than those 18-44 (69%)
- Pentecostals (85%) are more likely to select “Keep allegations in confidence…” than Christian/Church of Christ (69%), Lutherans (70%), Methodists (63%) and Presbyterian/Reformed (71%)
- Those with a Doctoral degree (80%) are more likely to “Keep allegations in confidence…” than those with a Master’s (71%)
Is it essential for church leaders to inform the congregation when a pastor has been disciplined for misconduct?

- African American pastors are most likely to select “No” (16%)
- Pastors of churches whose largest ethnicity is African American are most likely to select “No” (13%)
- Baptists (9%), Methodists (11%), and Pentecostals (9%) are more likely to select “No” than Lutherans (2%)
If a pastor commits adultery, how long, if at all, should the pastor withdraw from public ministry

- Pastors in the South are most likely to select “At least 3 months to a year” (37%)
- Pastors age 45-54 (38%) and 55-64 (35%) are more likely to select “At least 3 months to a year” than those age 65+ (22%)
- Pastors age 65+ (28%) are more likely to select “Withdraw permanently” than pastors age 55-64 (19%)
- Compared to White pastors, African American pastors are more likely to select “The pastor does not need to withdraw…” (7% v 3%) and “At least 3 months – a year” (45% v 30%)
- African American pastors are least likely to select “2 years or more” (2%) and “Withdraw permanently” (5%)
- Compared to pastors whose largest ethnicity is White, pastors whose largest ethnicity is African American are more likely to select “The pastor does not need to withdraw…” (8% v 3%) and “At least 3 months – a year” (43% v 30%), and less likely to select “2 years or more” (4% v 18%) and “Withdraw permanently” (8% v 25%)
If a pastor commits adultery, how long, if at all, should the pastor withdraw from public ministry (continued)

- Lutherans are least likely to select “At least 3 months – a year” (15%) and most likely to select “Withdraw permanently” (47%)
- Methodists (48%) are more likely to select “At least 3 months – a year” than Baptists (27%), Pentecostals (31%) and Presbyterian/Reformed (32%)
- Methodists are least likely to select “2 years or more” (5%)
- Baptists (30%) are more likely to select “Withdraw permanently” than Methodists (13%), Pentecostals (13%), and Presbyterian/Reformed (11%)
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